

move forward on arms control, building the peace in Bosnia, achieving progress on a wide range of issues; so will the Partnership For Peace, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Charter with Ukraine, and the Charter of Partnership I signed just last month with the presidents of the three Baltic States, and our Southeast Europe Action Plan, which I announced yesterday with President Stoyanav of Bulgaria.

Our effort to build a new Europe also depends upon keeping NATO's door open to other qualified European democracies. History teaches us that the realm of freedom in Europe has no fixed boundaries. The United States is determined that the visions of the past not circumscribe the boundaries of the future.

As the Senate begins its deliberations, I want to salute the indispensable role that leading members of both parties and both Houses of Congress have already played in bringing us to this day. The two Senators from Delaware have already been acknowledged, and, Mr. Vice President, I'm prepared to vote to move NATO headquarters to Wilmington. *[Laughter]* I thank the Senators and the Members of the Houses who are here today. And there are others, who know who their are—and we know who they are—who have played a very constructive role in this process.

I was especially pleased that a bipartisan group of Members joined me last summer at the NATO Summit in Madrid. The wide-ranging debate on this issue within Congress and across our Nation is indeed a model of the kind of thoughtful, nonpartisan discussion we must have, and I commend Congress for helping to lead it.

Now the decision rests in the hands of the Senate, and I believe it's in good hands.

This room is named for Benjamin Franklin, one of America's first envoys to Europe after independence. I'm reminded of the comment he made at the close of our Constitutional Convention. He noted that on the chair of the Convention's President, George Washington, was a painted figure of the sun, a symbol, he thought, of our new Republic. Mr. Franklin said, "I have the happiness to know it is rising and not a setting sun." In the wake of the cold war, some wondered

whether our alliance faced a rising or a setting sun, whether it had just a brilliant past, or perhaps an even brighter future. With the step we take today, and the decision I am confident the Senate will take in the near future, I know that our historic partnership of nations is a rising sun, and that its ascendancy will bring a more stable, more democratic, more peaceful, more unified future for all of us who live on both sides of the Atlantic.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. in the Benjamin Franklin Room at the State Department. In his remarks, he referred to former National Security Advisers Alexander M. Haig and Zbigniew Brzezinski; John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO; Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs of Hungary; Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek of Poland; and Foreign Minister Jaroslav Sedivy of the Czech Republic.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Protocols of Accession to NATO for Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic

February 11, 1998

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. These Protocols were opened for signature at Brussels on December 16, 1997, and signed on behalf of the United States of America and the other parties to the North Atlantic Treaty. I request the advice and consent of the Senate to the ratification of these documents, and transmit for the Senate's information the report made to me by the Secretary of State regarding this matter.

The accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will improve the ability of the United States to protect and advance our interests in the transatlantic area. The end of the Cold War changed the nature of the threats to this region, but not the fact that Europe's peace, stability, and well-being are vital to our own national security. The addition of these well-qualified democracies, which have demonstrated their commitment

to the values of freedom and the security of the broader region, will help deter potential threats to Europe, deepen the continent's stability, bolster its democratic advances, erase its artificial division, and strengthen an Alliance that has proved its effectiveness during and since the Cold War.

NATO is not the only instrument in our efforts to help build a new and undivided Europe, but it is our most important contributor to peace and security for the region. NATO's steadfastness during the long years of the Cold War, its performance in the mission it has led in Bosnia, the strong interest of a dozen new European democracies in becoming members, and the success of the Alliance's Partnership for Peace program all underscore the continuing vitality of the Alliance and the Treaty that brought it into existence.

NATO's mission in Bosnia is of particular importance. No other multinational institution possessed the military capabilities and political cohesiveness necessary to bring an end to the fighting in the former Yugoslavia—Europe's worst conflict since World War II—and to give the people of that region a chance to build a lasting peace. Our work in Bosnia is not yet complete, but we should be thankful that NATO existed to unite Allies and partners in this determined common effort. Similarly, we should welcome steps such as the Alliance's enlargement that can strengthen its ability to meet future challenges, beginning with NATO's core mission of collective defense and other missions that we and our Allies may choose to pursue.

The three states that NATO now proposes to add as full members will make the Alliance stronger while helping to enlarge Europe's zone of democratic stability. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic have been leaders in Central Europe's dramatic transformation over the past decade and already are a part of NATO's community of values. They each played pivotal roles in the overthrow of communist rule and repression, and they each proved equal to the challenge of comprehensive democratic and market reform. Together, they have helped to make Central Europe the continent's most robust zone of economic growth.

All three of these states will be security producers for the Alliance and not merely security consumers. They have demonstrated this through the accords they have reached with neighboring states, the contributions they have made to the mission in Bosnia, the forces they plan to commit to the Alliance, and the military modernization programs they have already begun and pledge to continue in the years to come at their own expense. These three states will strengthen NATO through the addition of military resources, strategic depth, and the prospect of greater stability in Europe's central region. American troops have worked alongside soldiers from each of these nations in earlier times, in the case of the Poles, dating back to our own Revolutionary War. Our cooperation with the Poles, Hungarians, and Czechs has contributed to our security in the past, and our Alliance with them will contribute to our security in the years to come.

The purpose of NATO's enlargement extends beyond the security of these three states, however, and entails a process encompassing more than their admission to the Alliance. Accordingly, these first new members should not and will not be the last. No qualified European democracy is ruled out as a future member. The Alliance has agreed to review the process of enlargement at its 1999 summit in Washington. As we prepare for that summit, I look forward to discussing this matter with my fellow NATO leaders. The process of enlargement, combined with the Partnership for Peace program, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the NATO-Russia Founding Act, and NATO's new charter with Ukraine, signify NATO's commitment to avoid any new division of Europe, and to contribute to its progressive integration.

A democratic Russia is and should be a part of that new Europe. With bipartisan congressional support, my Administration and my predecessor's have worked with our Allies to support political and economic reform in Russia and the other newly independent states and to increase the bonds between them and the rest of Europe. NATO's enlargement and other adaptations are consistent, not at odds, with that policy. NATO has repeatedly demonstrated that it does not threaten Russia and that it seeks closer and

more cooperative relations. We and our Allies welcomed the participation of Russian forces in the mission in Bosnia.

NATO most clearly signaled its interest in a constructive relationship through the signing in May 1997 of the NATO-Russia Founding Act. That Act, and the Permanent Joint Council it created, help to ensure that if Russia seeks to build a positive and peaceful future within Europe, NATO will be a full partner in that enterprise. I understand it will require time for the Russian people to gain a new understanding of NATO. The Russian people, in turn, must understand that an open door policy with regard to the addition of new members is an element of a new NATO. In this way, we will build a new and more stable Europe of which Russia is an integral part.

I therefore propose the ratification of these Protocols with every expectation that we can continue to pursue productive cooperation with the Russian Federation. I am encouraged that President Yeltsin has pledged his government's commitment to additional progress on nuclear and conventional arms control measures. At our summit in Helsinki, for example, we agreed that once START II has entered into force we will begin negotiations on a START III accord that can achieve even deeper cuts in our strategic arsenals. Similarly, Russia's ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention last year demonstrated that cooperation on a range of security matters will continue.

The Protocols of accession that I transmit to you constitute a decision of great consequence, and they involve solemn security commitments. The addition of new states also will entail financial costs. While those costs will be manageable and broadly shared with our current and new Allies, they nonetheless represent a sacrifice by the American people.

Successful ratification of these Protocols demands not only the Senate's advice and consent required by our Constitution, but also the broader, bipartisan support of the American people and their representatives. For that reason, it is encouraging that congressional leaders in both parties and both chambers have long advocated NATO's enlargement. I have endeavored to make the

Congress an active partner in this process. I was pleased that a bipartisan group of Senators and Representatives accompanied the U.S. delegation at the NATO summit in Madrid last July. Officials at all levels of my Administration have consulted closely with the relevant committees and with the bipartisan Senate NATO Observer Group. It is my hope that this pattern of consultation and cooperation will ensure that NATO and our broader European policies continue to have the sustained bipartisan support that was so instrumental to their success throughout the decades of the Cold War.

The American people today are the direct beneficiaries of the extraordinary sacrifices made by our fellow citizens in the many theaters of that "long twilight struggle," and in the two world wars that preceded it. Those efforts aimed in large part to create across the breadth of Europe a lasting, democratic peace. The enlargement of NATO represents an indispensable part of today's program to finish building such a peace, and therefore to repay a portion of the debt we owe to those who went before us in the quest for freedom and security.

The rise of new challenges in other regions does not in any way diminish the necessity of consolidating the increased level of security that Europe has attained at such high cost. To the contrary, our policy in Europe, including the Protocols I transmit herewith, can help preserve today's more favorable security environment in the transatlantic area, thus making it possible to focus attention and resources elsewhere while providing us with additional Allies and partners to help share our security burdens.

The century we are now completing has been the bloodiest in all of human history. Its lessons should be clear to us: the wisdom of deterrence, the value of strong Alliances, the potential for overcoming past divisions, and the imperative of American engagement in Europe. The NATO Alliance is one of the most important embodiments of these truths, and it is in the interest of the United States to strengthen this proven institution and adapt it to a new era. The addition to this Alliance of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic is an essential part of that program.

It will help build a Europe that can be integrated, democratic, free, and at peace for the first time in its history. It can help ensure that we and our Allies and our partners will enjoy greater security and freedom in the century that is about to begin.

I therefore recommend that the Senate give prompt advice and consent to ratification of these historic Protocols.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
February 11, 1998.

Statement on Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt

February 11, 1998

I have known Bruce Babbitt for many years. He is a man of the highest integrity and a dedicated public servant. I am convinced that when this matter is concluded he will be vindicated. I look forward to his continuing service to the American people.

Remarks at the Millennium Lecture

February 11, 1998

The President. Thank you very much, Professor Bailyn, for that wonderful, wonderful lecture. I thank the First Lady and Ellen Lovell for conceiving this entire Millennium series. The others will have a hard act to follow.

I can't think of a better way to inaugurate this series of lectures than with one on the founding of our Republic, also the first White House cyberspace lecture. We are truly imagining—honoring the past, not by imagining the future but through the prism of the future.

I thank Bernard Bailyn for what he said and the way he said it and for a lifetime of work. We received the distilled wisdom tonight of more than four decades of hard thinking and work about what it means to be an American and what America means to Americans and to the rest of the world.

I was rather amused—he said, “You know, when we started we had all these people who came from a lot of different places, they moved around a lot, they disagreed a lot, they

were disdainful of Government”—I thought, what's new? [*Laughter*] But they were also, as Professor Bailyn said at the end of his remarks, at their best moments profoundly idealistic and always, always appropriately suspicious of untrammelled power in the hands of anyone in the Government.

They were very wise about human nature, our Founders. They understood that there was light and dark in human nature. They understood that we are all imperfect, but society is, nonetheless, improvable. And in some ways, I think their most important charge to us was to always be about the business of forming a more perfect Union. As I said in my State of the Union Address, they understood it would never be perfect but that we always had to try to make it more perfect. And that is what they always tried to do, and when they left the scene they instructed us to follow suit. And we've been at it ever since.

We have a lot of questions that we have to face about the new millennium: We're more diverse than ever before; can we really be one America? How do we have a Government that is flexible enough and strong enough to give people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives and still avoid the abuses that the Founders understood would always be there when people were too driven by power, instead of the larger purposes of America? How can we widen the circle of opportunity to include everyone in a market system that seems inherently exclusive in some ways?

There are lots of other challenges facing us, but I think our ability to meet the challenges of the 21st century rest in no small measure on our understanding of the constant values and insights with which we began. By honoring the past, we know there were forebears there who were always imagining the future. By imagining the future, we must do so with the hope that all of our successes will honor our past, for it is there, in the depth of our values and the genius of our system, that we began the long journey that has brought us to this day and that I am convinced will take us to better days ahead.

Thank you again, Professor Bailyn. And now I'd like to turn the discussion over to the Director of the White House Millennium